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Titusville Amateur Radio Club

TARC NEWSLETTER

October 1988

Officers

President: Ron Swank KB4DCZ 269-3087
Vice Pres: Dan Boyle K3KS 268-2469
Secretary: Dawn Jacobs KB4BNL 267-1896
Treasurer: Clyde Lee K4EOS 267-9375

President's Corner

It is hard to believe that it is October already. We are starting to get ready for the Titusville Chrismas parade again. Anyone that would like to help is welcome. It is also the time to start thinking about the new officers for the coming year. I just got back from Gambia again and got my call sign after I got back so "I could not make a contact (C56/KB4DCZ)" sure is a mouth full. It looks like I will be going to Morocco for the next launch so I will miss another meeting; sure seems to be alot here lately. I would like to thank all the locals that are making the club run so well and work so hard to make this an outstanding club. I guess that I will signoff and let Doug use this space for something worthwhile, and not just my talking. 73's
RON C56/KB4DCZ

The Smilin' Jack Fly-In Message Center Station
by
Ozzie Osband (N4SCY)

The Annual Smilin' Jack Fly-In was held on September 24 & 25 at Dunn Air Park in Titusville. I was asked a year ago to look into having a message center at the event. I went to the Lakeland Fly-In last spring, and saw the amount of work the Lakeland ARC put into a message center to serve 3000 people at that fly-in. I "borrowed" a Lakeland message form, and made one up for this event with their format (I used to have quite a reputation with a paste pot).

Since the Titusville event was only supposed to draw about 300 people, I set my sights alot lower. I set up a PC Clone and TNC to provide a message center via Packet Radio. I handled a total of 4 messages the whole weekend, but got alot out of it. I learned to "WordStar" my messages to include CTRL-V (the Packet "pass through" character) before each Carriage Return. The Return is usually a character telling the TNC to send the packet, but I wanted to fill the packet before it was sent.

Then I set the TNC to PACLEN (Packet Length) of 255, and set the line delay to 25. This way, the link to the PBBS through two digipeaters had enough

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Upcoming Events

> October 25, November 22 - next TARC meetings, 7 p.m., JayCees Building on Singleton Ave.
> Every Thursday night - TARC Friendship Net, 7 p.m., 146.91 MHz
> Every 3rd Saturday - SBARC / ARRL exams, 9:30 a.m. registration, FIT room Q20 under ham radio mast

The Great American Scorpion Hunt
By
Wynn Rostek (WB4ZUY)

It all started out innocently enough, but then I suppose these things always do. Dave (WB4SIG) and I had worked for several hours putting the finishing touches on a repeater control package we were building for the club. The hour was quite late and we were both tired, but since we had put so much work into the controller that night, we decided to install it and see what else needed to be done to it to get it operational.

We threw the controller, solder, soldering iron, pliers, dikes, wire strippers, VOM, solder flux, HT's, flashlights and schematics into the back of Dave's truck and headed up to the repeater site.

I don't know what it is about repeater sites, but it seems like the more difficult to get to and dangerous they are, the more desirable for radio installations they become. We have a real beauty. The only way to improve our site would be for the people that use the hut for target practice to use automatic weapons, or maybe shoulder launched rockets.

The "road" (I use the term in its loosest sense) that leads to the hut has seen better days. Actually I have driven on old stagecoach trails in the California desert that are in much better shape. This is the road I have to travel with Dave, a thought that sends chills down my spine.

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Scorpion Hunt

See, Dave doesn't drive like you and I. Dave doesn't drive at all, he simply operates his aircraft in close proximity to the ground so he won't be picked up on radar. Of course Dave, being a volunteer fireman, has a strange kind of death wish. I am convinced (after riding with him for several hundreds of miles) that his greatest desire is to depart this veil of tears in a mass of flaming wreckage. I do not share this particular vision with him. I'd like to stick around long enough to see who wins the next election.

The headlights of the truck, bobbing up and down like a woodpecker's head, show that someone has been operating dump trucks on our road. My whole life flashes before my eyes. The soft sand has been churned into huge ruts. The whole area looks like the grand canyon. "Hang on, I'm going to have to speed up to make it.", Dave warns. I suddenly become very religious.

The engine whine climbs past audibility and the airspeed indicator pegs out. There is a tremendous crash as we plow through ruts, sand flying over the truck in great arcs, clearing the truck and the camper top before crashing to earth. I scramble madly about the cab of the truck, picking up my teeth. (which had been jarred loose by the sudden impact)

The engine started to lug down as the truck climbed the final hill. The last remnants of the Donner party drifted past the passenger window. I checked to make sure I still had all my major organs, I did. "Things are starting to look up.", I said to myself. Sometimes I can be very wrong.

Dave threw open his door as the truck skidded to a halt and made a mad dash for the gate. I went to the back of the truck and gathered the 4 boxes of equipment we had brought with us. The pack mule we had hoped to use had been thrown completely out of the truck when we hit the ruts, so I lashed the boxes to my back with some jumper cables Dave had.

By the time I had made it to the hut, Dave had the locks off and the door open. He very helpfully passed the boxes of equipment through the door and into the hut. We slammed the hut door shut just as the first group of mosquitoes slammed into the hut with a resounding thud. I heard them start the acetylene torch. We would have to work fast tonight.

Dave pulled the cover off the repeater and as he pulled the controller card from its socket, the scorpion appeared. The little monster had been hiding between the controller card and the RF shield. As you know, insects are cold blooded, and the colder an insect is, the slower he moves. Our little friend had been below the +5 volt regulator, and was a toasty 120 degrees or so. He moved very fast. As a matter of fact, he made 4 laps around the controller card before poor Dave had a chance to jerk his hand back. Dave said a few words that can't be repeated here. We then started to hunt for the scorpion so we could kill it and get on with our work.

Dave looked at the side of the RF shield, he looked under the RF shield as best he could without getting his head too close. He looked behind the repeater, and he looked all over the floor. Speedy was no where to be seen. We had a choice to make, we could give up for the night (meaning another trip to the repeater with Dave) or we could work on the repeater and hope we didn't get stung, or we could take the place apart until we found the scorpion and then smash him to bits so we could work in peace. Dave grabbed a screwdriver and started to disassemble the repeater.

When we got to the point where we removed the RF shield, the secret hiding place was found. The scorpion was wrapped around the head of a screw on the underside of the RF shield. Dave grabbed the blade of the screwdriver and smashed the scorpion with the handle. The scorpion fell to the ground and Dave stepped on him for good measure.

"Biggest scorpion I've ever seen up here, must be two inches long.", Dave remarked. I suggested that the scorpion would have been 3 inches long from tip to tail if he had been stretched out. Just then Les (K4SJC) called to see how we were doing, and Dave told him about the scorpion which was "...over three inches long.", it had started.

By Thursday night, the group at the IHOP was regaled with tales of a 4 inch killer scorpion. This sinister black beast stalked us through the maze of piping, electrical panels and radio gear much to the delight of an eager crowd.

Later that week I overheard Dave talking to Bud, (K4CWG) but all I could hear were snatches of the story. As Dave progressed, he grew more excited, speaking louder and faster, waving his arms in great circles and jerking his head this way and that. I moved closer so that I could hear better. By the time I got close enough to hear, Dave was painting a strange picture....

Dave was crawling backwards, dragging his twisted broken leg along the blood soaked floor. The wind was whipping the stinging rain into his face through the hole that had been ripped in the side of the hut. The lightning flashes briefly illuminated the giant four foot long scorpion, half draped over the rent metal. Dave was chambering the last shell, the 12 gauge shotgun clicking softly as he pushed the safety off....

At this point Bud was gripping the edge of the table, his knuckles turning white. I almost spoke up then, setting the record straight on the size of the scorpion, but I bit my tongue and remained silent. I did mention something about Dave's leg not being in a cast, and Dave muttered something about vitamins and new wonder drugs. I thought about pointing out that there was no hole in the hut, but decided to bite my tongue once more.

Bud was not the final victim, and the story grew in the telling. One by one, the hams in town were cornered, and the tale of the giant scorpion repeated for the benefit of each and every one of them. Dave improved with each telling.

Two weeks after that fateful Tuesday night I walked across the street to borrow a copy of the schematic of the old repeater controller. When Diane answered the door, I asked if Dave was in. Diane just rolled

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Scorpion Hunt

her eyes and motioned towards the living room. There seated on the couch was Steven Spielberg, frantically scribbling notes on a yellow legal pad as Dave wove his wondrous story.

It seems that I had arrived at the end of the story, and Dave had just gotten to the part of the story where he finished loading the back of the pickup with dynamite and was just about ready to drive the truck under the 50 foot long giant scorpion that threatened to destroy central florida.

As Dave got to the part where he jumps out of the truck just before the explosion, he leaps up on the couch and throwing his arms wide makes a tremendous "BOOM!!!!", sending the children fleeing to their bedrooms for safety. Spielberg is writing as fast as he can, his head shaking in wonderment over Dave's narrow escape. I start to point out that the truck in question is sitting in Dave's garage at that very moment, and was very much intact for a truck that had blown a 50 foot scorpion to bits, but I bit my swollen, tender tongue once again.

Friends, if you have not yet been cornered and subjected to the tale of the giant 500 foot scorpion from outerspace, when you see Dave coming, run for the hills, don't slow down and don't look back. I hear he has started adding special effects.

Classifieds

Kenwood TS-830F HF w/ CW filter & Shure 444 mike - $550, Swan 400 HF 80m to 10m CW & SSB - $125, HeathKit 2036A 2 meter mobile w/50W linear - $200, Turner +2 desk mike - $10, Dentron Jr. 300 W antenna match - $20, Cariole headphones - $5, D104 mike - $25; Vern Bauer 267-2907 after 4 p.m.

The Editor's Desk

Special thanks this month to Wynn WB4ZUY for his story on the hazards of late night repeater duty. Thanks also to Ozzie N4SCY for his report on the Smilin' Jack Fly-in packet message center.

"Investments" are the editorial theme this month. Dan KW4T of Merritt Island has a lawsuit against Brevard County for their statute of limiting the height of which an antenna tower may be. If you agree with him enough to help him monetarily, then give him a call at 453-4413 for info. If you don't agree and you feel strongly enough to write an editorial.... I consider a few dollars his way an investment for all hams in Brevard County. A thirty-five feet limitation is somewhat ridiculous for the more serious of amateur radio operations. By the way, I've been cautioned to use a disclaimer for this article. Please note that this is my opinion and mine only. It seems that a similar article appeared in another local newsletter and one disgruntled ham turned in the clubs roster to the Brevard D.A. in charge of the case.

Investment #2: Ron and Wayne are setting up a packet digipeater to work on 145.07 MHz. It will have 200 W ERP North, South, and West. If you work packet now or expect to work it in the future, please help with the costs. This is a non-club venture and the same disclaimer above applies. By the way, Ron's President's article was downloaded from a packet BBS located in Sanford (KB4LB) via the Orlando NET/ROM node (ORL1).

Wayne (KB4YLY) also is working on antennas to support field day next year. If you have any materials such as CB, TV, or ham antennas, push up masts or pipe, tubing, flat stock, sheeting, and / or clamps, give Wayne a call.

Several people helped out with the repeater 'overhaul'. Bud, Les, Dave, Archie, Wynn, Val, Clyde, Charlie and a couple of Bud's out of state friends were involved in

See Desk next column

Smilin' Jack

time to get an ACK (acknowledgement) back to the TNC (Terminal node Controller) before the next packet went out. I used CrossTalk as the communications package to talk to the TNC.

The benefits of working the Fly-In were neat. The Fly-In people had made the proper phone calls (some of the last minute ones were tried through the repeater), and gotten clearence for a fly-over of the Kennedy Space Center two weeks before Discovery's STS-26 mission. We were allowed to fly within 4-1/2 miles of launch pad 39B where the space ship sat. The distance of 4-1/2 miles represents the center line of the Shuttle runway at KSC, and I got the thrill of being on final approach to the runway. OK, so it was only a Cessna 182, and we couldn't even do a "touch-&-go" (verboten under the fly-over clearences we got), but a thrill none the less.

Fred K4ZS, and ARRL assistant section manager Carl AA4MI (who took pictures to submit to QST) were among the visitors to the Fly-In Special Event Station. If you have some time next year, drop on by. A special thank you to Fred K4DII for digipeating the traffic.

Minutes of the September 27th Meeting

Meeting called to order at 7:10 p.m.

Old business:

- Les reported on repeater status.
  > Received cavities and installed antennas.
  > New analog board is being worked on by Wynn (WB4ZUY) and Dave (WB4SIG) to interface with new controller.
- Ozzie reported on packet message center he set up for Smilin' Jack Fly-in.
- By-laws were discussed. Bob Young (N4DQT) had some amendments to the By-laws.
- Bud reported on all the people who helped put the new antenna on the tower. Antenna cost was $350.60.

New business:

- Les reported on communications support for Red Cross support of shuttle launch. Volunteering were Clyde (K4EOS), Lloyd (KA4LTK), Al (WD4HIH), Bonnie (WB9TUM), Les (K4SJC), Bob (N4DQT) and Ozzie (N4SCY).
- A request was made to set up 2 meter (repeater) to HF link to support an educational payload being launched aboard an E-Prime manufactured rocket.
- Dan (K4WT) requested financial support from members for his suit against Brevard County regarding PRB-1 antenna height regulations.
- Wayne (KB4YLY) is looking for old antennas for next year's field day activities.

- Treasurer's report by Clyde:
  Balance: $521.29 as of September 27, 1988

A motion was made and seconded to accept Treasurer's report. All in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

- Dawn Jacobs, Secy

Desk

various ways at different times: the cavity removal, borrowed cavities from W4AKE, reinstallation, receiver removal and alignment, antenna removal and installation of the new Phelps-Dodge antenna. The club (sorry, no disclaimer) thanks all of you and anyone that I may have (probably) forgotten, besides N4QVY.

Condolences to Kathy KA4CVC for the loss of her mother. Our thoughts are with you.

Respectfully, Doug - N4QVY

THIS IS ARRL HQ STATION W1AW NEWINGTON CT. U.S.A.
ARRL 117/116, PFB 41 AND SB 285 FOLLOW

QST DE W1AW
HR ARRL BULLETIN NR 117 ARLB117
FROM ARRL HEADQUARTERS
NEWINGTON CT OCTOBER 11, 1988
TO ALL RADIO AMATEURS BT

THE AMATEUR RADIO SENSE OF CONGRESS RESOLUTION IN THE SENATE, S CON RES 127, HAS BEEN SLIGHTLY AMENDED AND ADDED TO THE FCC AUTHORIZATION BILL, S.1048, AS SECTION 10. THIS BILL HAS BEEN ADOPTED BY THE SENATE AND SENT TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES. IF THE HOUSE KEEPS SECTION 10, PASSES THE AUTHORIZATION BILL AND THE PRESIDENT SIGNS IT, THEN THE AMATEUR RADIO RESOLUTION AS AMENDED WILL BE A PART OF A PUBLIC LAW RATHER THAN SIMPLY A RESOLUTION. STAY TUNED TO W1AW FOR FURTHER BULLETINS ON THE INITIATIVES IN CONGRESS AR

QST DE W1AW
HR ARRL BULLETIN NR 116 ARLB116
FROM ARRL HEADQUARTERS
NEWINGTON CT OCTOBER 3, 1988
TO ALL RADIO AMATEURS BT

THE ARRL HAS REQUESTED THE FCC ISSUE AN ORDER PERMITTING IMMEDIATE INTERIM USE OF 17 METERS, 18.068 TO 18.168 MHZ, BY RADIO AMATEURS ON A SECONDARY, NON INTERFERENCE BASIS. THE ARRL SAID THAT THE LARGE NUMBER OF RADIO AMATEURS FROM OTHER COUNTRIES ALREADY OPERATING ON 17 METERS HAS SHOWN THAT IMMEDIATE DOMESTIC AMATEUR OPERATION WOULD CAUSE NO SIGNIFICANT ADDITIONAL INTERFERENCE TO THE FEW, IF ANY, REMAINING GOVERNMENT FIXED STATIONS STILL USING THE BAND. THE ARRL REQUEST SAID THAT AMATEURS WOULD FOLLOW THE FCC SUGGESTED BAND PLAN OF 18.068 TO 18.110 MHZ FOR CW AND DIGITAL EMISSIONS, AND 18.110 TO 18.168 MHZ FOR CW, PHONE, FACSIMILE AND TELEVISION EMISSIONS AND THAT AMATEURS WOULD NOT OBJECT TO A 200 WATT OUTPUT POWER LIMITATION IN THE INTERIM UNTIL FINAL FCC RULES FOR 17 METERS WERE ADOPTED.

AR
QST DE W1AW
HR PROPAGATION FORECAST BULLETIN NR 41 ARLP041
FROM ARRL HEADQUARTERS
NEWINGTON CT OCTOBER 10, 1988
TO ALL RADIO AMATEURS BT

THE SOLAR FLUX AVERAGE FOR SEPTEMBER WAS 152, A SHADE LOWER THAN FIGURES FOR JULY AND AUGUST, THE TWO HIGHEST MONTHS IN CYCLE 22 THUS FAR. LATE SEPTEMBER SHOWED A SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE, HOWEVER. BEGINNING WITH THE 22ND, THE FLUX WAS 171 OR HIGHER DAILY THROUGH AT LEAST OCTOBER 9. THIS TWO WEEK SOLAR ACTIVITY PLATEAU BROUGHT SUSTAINED DX ON 28, 24 AND 21 MHZ UNEQUALED IN RECENT YEARS. THE SOLAR FLUX REACHED 195 AND 202 ON OCTOBER 2ND AND 3RD, BOTH CYCLE 22 HIGHS. IT WAS DOWN TO 174 ON OCTOBER 8TH, BUT EVEN THIS IS 60 POINTS HIGHER THAN FOUR WEEKS AGO WHEN THE SAME AREAS OF THE SUN WERE FACING THE EARTH. LOWER FLUX READINGS ARE EXPECTED THIS WEEK, BUT WE ARE NEARING THE MOST FAVORABLE SUN POSITION FOR HF DX IN THE NORTHERN HEMISPHERE. ALMOST THE ENTIRE WORLD HAS BEEN WORKABLE ON 28 MHZ ALREADY, SO EVEN 50 MHZ MAY BE OPEN FOR F LAYER DX IN NOVEMBER. THIS IS MOST LIKELY WHEN THE SOLAR FLUX IS ABOVE 200 AND THE GEOMAGNETIC K INDEX IS 2 OR LOWER. NORTH SOUTH PATHS, SUCH AS USA TO ARGENTINA, MAY OPEN WHEN THE WWV K INDEX DROPS, SOON AFTER A MAJOR GEOMAGNETIC DISTURBANCE. REMEMBER, THE K INDEX IS NEW EVERY THREE HOURS. SIX METER TRANSATLANTIC COMMUNICATION IS LIKELY TO REQUIRE HIGHER SOLAR FLUX LEVELS THAN TRANSEQUATORIAL WORK.

WE HAVE HAD REQUESTS FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE EFFECTS OF RISING SOLAR ACTIVITY ON THE LOWER AMATEUR FREQUENCIES NORMALLY USED FOR TRAFFIC NETS. UNLIKE DX, TRAFFIC WORK MAY BE BEST IN THE YEARS OF LOW SOLAR ACTIVITY. WATCHING THE WWV K INDEX AND SOLAR FLUX TRENDS MAY BE USEFUL.

AMERICAN SUNSPOT NUMBERS FOR SEPTEMBER 29 THROUGH OCTOBER 5 WERE BETWEEN 74 AND 128 WITH A MEAN OF 110.6. AR